

OCT 15 1962

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
2101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

October 10, 1962

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
School of Medicine
Stanford University
Palo Alto, California

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

On behalf of the Academy, I wish to express deep appreciation for the contributions you have made to the space program by your service on the Space Science Board and as chairman of its exobiology group. For more than two years you have devoted much time to this demanding activity and have brought your committee's work to a point where I think it would be unreasonable on the Academy's part to make further demands upon you of the type you have been subject to thus far. I am especially grateful for the participation of Academy members like yourself in our important undertakings, but I believe that we must minimize inroads on the time of the scientific community, striving to relieve individuals of committee burdens as promptly as possible and to redistribute such burdens periodically. I am writing in a similar way to Dr. Lambertsen and Dr. Pittendrigh.

The Board, as I believe you know, has gone through several stages. Even before NASA was established, the Board had a very pressing and serious task of stimulating experimental work. Then it turned its attention to careful studies in various fields of science, particularly those of the physical sciences. Some two years ago scientists like yourself and Pittendrigh began comparable studies in biology. The Summer Study has marked another turning point: it gave us a useful, critical review of what has been achieved in space science so far, a look ahead to the major scientific problems and opportunities of the coming years, and an examination of many policy and administrative questions. The Summer Study concerned itself with both the physical sciences and the life sciences; the progress noted in the latter area, to which the Board turned its attention more recently, was most gratifying.

During and since the Summer Study, I have been examining the functions and organization of the Board with the help of Dr. Berkner and the Board's new chairman, Dr. Hess. The reorientation of the Board that began last winter under the direction of Dr. Bronk and Dr. Berkner, but which was held in abeyance during the Summer Study, saw

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a number of useful consolidations. In the course of this, Dr. Hartline, Dr. Hornig, Mr. Shapley, Dr. Urey, and Dr. Wexler were freed of their direct responsibilities although they did consent, I am happy to say, to serve as consultants to the Board. We are continuing with appropriate steps of this kind, intended to focus the Board's attention on basic scientific problems in the light of current national needs and to reduce or eliminate the burdens on those who have done their share. In the life sciences I feel that you, Lambertsen, and Pittendrigh have largely achieved our basic objectives of some two years ago.

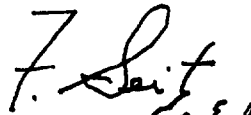
There are two further requests upon your time and energy which I should like to submit to you at this time. First, I should be grateful to you for a letter summarizing your own views on scientific questions involved in the national man-in-space effort. These views would be useful to us in considering the future activities of the Board in this area. I have asked Dr. Allan H. Brown to serve on the Board. Dr. Hess and I now feel that all the life science interests of the Board can be grouped in one committee under Brown, although I have not yet discussed this specific approach with Dr. Brown.

Second, as mentioned above, I hope that you will be willing to serve the Board as a consultant, joining such colleagues as Hartline and Urey. Such service on your part would enable the Board to call upon you on specific items where your past activities and professional experience would be invaluable, but at the same time the burdens placed upon you would be minimized.

Let me again express my warm appreciation for your dedicated attention to Board problems during the last two years.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'F. Seitz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frederick Seitz
President

cc: Dr. Hess